



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Kittitas County becomes state's 21st county to be quarantined for apple maggot

OLYMPIA – On Monday (Aug. 16) Kittitas County becomes the 21st county in the state to be quarantined for the apple maggot, a major fruit pest that destroys apple, crabapple, cherry crops, and native hawthorn trees.

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) officials stress the quarantine does not prohibit the commercial sale of fruit from the county. Under quarantine rules, apples from Kittitas County will continue to be shipped when accompanied by an easily obtainable certificate issued by the state Department of Agriculture.

The certificate states either that no apple maggot flies were caught within one half-mile of the orchard shipping the fruit, or that flies were caught within one half-mile of the orchard but inspections revealed no apple maggot larvae in the fruit.

In addition to requiring commercial fruit to be shipped with a certificate, the quarantine also prohibits the movement of homegrown fruit from the county to non-infested areas of the state. Of the 21 counties now under apple maggot quarantine rules, only Kittitas County is in the top 10 apple-producing counties in the state.

Aggressive actions are underway in Kittitas County to ensure homeowners with backyard fruit trees, particularly those close to commercial orchards, control apple maggot and other horticultural pests and diseases on their property. Letters were sent April 30 to hundreds of Kittitas County property owners detailing their responsibilities and providing sources of information on care of trees.

"We are very pleased with the positive response from people wanting to take care of their trees, and we hope that it continues," said Urban Eberhart, chairman of the Kittitas County Horticultural Pest and Disease Board.

For more information about the apple maggot control actions underway in the county, contact the WSU Extension Office/Kittitas County Horticultural Pest and Disease Board at telephone (509) 962-7507.

WSDA director Valoria Loveland, who approved adding Kittitas County to the states' apple maggot quarantine list this spring, said the action was taken out of concern for the viability of Washington's apple industry. "This is an unfortunate situation that must be addressed to ensure Washington apples continue to be shipped to domestic and international markets," she said. "I have directed my staff to work with Kittitas County growers to implement these requirements in the least burdensome way."

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The decision to quarantine Kittitas County was made after 26 apple maggot flies were trapped in the Ellensburg area last summer and live apple maggot pupae were detected at two sites. Two public hearings on whether to establish an apple maggot quarantine in the county were held in Ellensburg earlier this year.

Although no apple maggot fly has been caught within three miles of any commercial orchard in Kittitas County, apple maggots live not only in commercial fruits but also in the fruit of native hawthorn. There is a large population of hawthorn that could serve as a pathway to the commercial orchards. Of the 21 counties now quarantined for the apple maggot, 17 are in Western Washington and four are in Eastern Washington (Kittitas, Skamania, Klickitat, and Spokane).

A six square-mile area in the southeast corner of the county, isolated geographically and biologically from potential infestation by natural barriers, is exempted from the quarantine.

Persons with questions on certification necessary to ship fruit out of Kittitas County may contact WSDA's District Commodity Inspection offices in Yakima at (509) 225-2650 or Wenatchee at (509) 662-6161.

Persons with questions on the quarantine or who want a copy of the new quarantine rule may contact Mike Klaus, WSDA entomologist, at (509) 225-2609 or by email at mklaus@agr.wa.gov, or Jim Marra, managing entomologist, at (360) 664-0905 or by email at jmarra@agr.wa.gov.

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